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# In Deed: A Survey of Programs and Activities Related to Identity and Mission: Seattle University

Editorial Board

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# Seattle University

*Seattle, Washington*

For more than a century, Seattle University has encouraged and developed the minds and spirits of tens of thousands of students from the Pacific Northwest, the United States and the world. Currently, more than 4,800 students are enrolled in this largest independent educational institution in the Northwest. Through the university's core curriculum, all Seattle University students are introduced to the unique tradition of Jesuit liberal education. Central to Seattle University's mission statement, the core curriculum aims to develop the whole person for a life of service, to provide a foundation for questioning and learning in any major or profession, and to give a common intellectual experience to all Seattle University students while also preparing men and women for successful, purposeful, meaningful lives and for service to others.

## Service Learning

Seattle University currently offers 18 courses with community service components. The university's Volunteer Center works with faculty members to facilitate the community service projects in which students spend time each week volunteering for service organizations whose work is related to their studies and reflect on their firsthand experiences during classroom discussions.

The Volunteer Center also helps match students seeking a variety of other volunteer opportunities lo-

cally, as well as in organizations around the world. For example, each year a group of students travels to Calcutta, India, to volunteer with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity.

Seattle University's Habitat for Humanity chapter, now in its fourth year, sends students each spring quarter to build houses for migrant farm workers and with Volunteer Chore Ministry to paint and provide minor house repairs to low-income, disabled and senior residents in Seattle throughout the year.

In the Belize Reach Out Program, students spend 10 days during spring break doing service work in Belize, in Central America, in cooperation with members of the Jesuit International Volunteers.

In addition to the usual religious opportunities one would expect on a Jesuit cam-

pus, students are also invited to participate in a five-day or three-day Ignatian retreat during the school year. This fall, the university will formally launch its own participation in the worldwide association of men and women called Christian Life Communities (CLC).

## Institute on Humanities and Family Structure

Last spring, the university launched a unique program called the Institute on Humanities and Family Structure. The institute, anticipated as a national model, is training 30 university students to lead discussions on an array of issues with teenagers in church youth groups. The program is aimed at strengthening American families by emphasizing the importance of maintaining good personal relationships with parents and peers, by learning to recognize and improve dysfunctional situations, and by thus helping teens to be-

come more responsible decision makers and contributing members of their communities.

## Sullivan Leadership Award

In 1988, Seattle University established the Sullivan Leadership Award in recognition of Father William J. Sullivan, now in his 18th year as president of the university. This award, the university's largest and most distinguished scholarship program, provides full scholarships and room grants annually to students who typify the Jesuit tradition of service, leadership and academic excellence. The hope is that when Sullivan scholarship recipients graduate, they will carry on the Jesuit mission throughout their lives, exemplifying the meaning and value of a Seattle University education.

## Institute for Theological Studies

Seattle University made history when the Institute for Theological Studies (ITS) was founded in 1985 as a joint venture between the university and the Seattle Archdiocese to prepare people for ministry in the Church using resources from the local church and university. It offers master's degrees in divinity, theological studies, and in pastoral studies with concentrations in ecclesial ministry, foundations in spirituality, religious education, and ministry with aging. A Scripture and Leadership Training (SALT) program has also been created within the institute. SALT is a professional development course offered at 11 off-campus locations.

Father William J. Sullivan SJ (far left), president of Seattle University, with Sullivan Leadership Award winners. The award program, initiated in 1989, offers full scholarships and room grants to outstanding students who typify the Jesuit tradition of service, leadership and academic excellence.



## **Children's Literacy Project**

During the 1990-92 school years, in celebration of its 100-year anniversary, Seattle University launched the Children's Literacy Project. This program, funded by a number of grants and donations, recruits volunteer tutors from the university to work with at-risk students in Seattle Public Schools. More than 70 members of the Seattle University community volunteer each quarter with 12 public schools participating.

## **Jesuit Identity**

To help articulate the Jesuit mission and philosophy of education to the campus community, the university offers a variety of programs. For example, there are special orientations for new faculty and staff members at which new members of the university community are introduced to the origins of the Jesuit tradition in the Spiritual Exercises, in the life and works of Ignatius Loyola, in Jesuit history.

Each fall, all faculty and staff members are invited to participate in a five-day Ignatian retreat in which participants are accompanied in daily, personal spiritual direction. In an effort to encourage employees to participate, the university matches up to two vacation days taken when attending spiritual development activities. This policy is called "spiritual development leave."

Faculty and staff members are also encouraged to participate in a program of the full Spiritual Exercises in daily life, over a six-

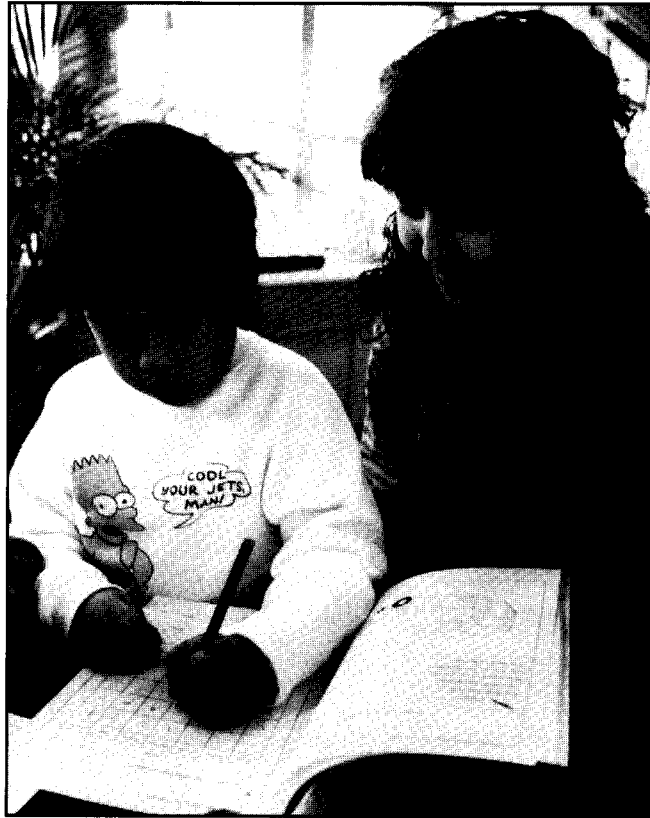
month period from October through April each year. The Exercises, of course, serve as the chief source of identity for all Jesuits and all Jesuit institutions.

Several years ago, the Jesuit community reinstituted the Father Albert Lemieux dinners. The dinners, named in honor of a former Seattle University president, are hosted by the university Jesuits. Every faculty and staff member is invited to one of the dinners during the school year. Their purpose is to provide an opportunity for university colleagues to gather informally with the Jesuits and to further Jesuit identity on campus.

Faculty and staff members are also invited to take part in a six-part Ignatian seminar, wherein they read and engage in discussion of documents on Jesuit identity, mission and educational theory.

Father Sullivan SJ the President, said he is determined to see that the Jesuit philosophy of education remains the dominant philosophy at Seattle University. "It is for that reason we have been working for a number of years on the transmission of that philosophy to faculty, administrators and staff who are not Jesuits," he said. "There is nothing arcane or secret about it. It is a way of looking at education, human nature and society; and you don't have to be a member of the Jesuit order to understand or commit yourself to it."

A nearly 65-member group called the Colleagues in Jesuit Education meets five times a year. The group is composed of members of



Seattle University student volunteer Tracy Nagamine helps a T.T. Minor Elementary School pupil with a homework assignment. The tutoring program, called the Children's Literacy Project, is a community-service program established three years ago in celebration of the university's centennial. University students, faculty, and staff members who participate in the program volunteer a minimum of one hour a week to teach reading and math to students in the Seattle School District.

the university community who understand and are dedicated to carrying on the Jesuit tradition as the number of Jesuits on campus declines. The group is not a decision-making body but rather "a new ethos-bearing community," Sullivan said. "It is one that we've got to build, rather than take for granted. I see this as the most important effort that I'm working at here at the university, in the 1990's."

In addition to the Colleagues, there is an assistant to the president for Jesuit identity and the university will establish a Center for Jesuit Identity this fall. And finally, a part of its present \$55 million

fund-raising campaign is an endowed fund to support programs to enhance the Jesuit traditions of Seattle University. These programs, which will include summer and school-year retreats for lay faculty, seminars, training for peer ministry and efforts to recruit additional Jesuits for visiting academic positions, will enable the university to remain true to its Jesuit mission and values as it moves into the 21st century.